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CIA Chief Discloses Russian Help in '62

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Wire Reports

Washington — In his first public speech as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Richard Helms yesterday declared that "a number of well-placed and courageous Russians" helped the United States in identification of Soviet weapons in Cuba during the 1962 missile crisis.

He mentioned no names but the reference appeared clearly to be to Col. Oleg Penkovsky, the Soviet intelligence officer who brought much information out during visits to London in the 16 months prior to the missile crisis. He was arrested that October and subsequently executed for treason.

"The Penkovsky Papers" published as a book in 1965 were widely believed to be based on CIA interrogations, and the claim was made in the introduction that Penkovsky's information was invaluable during the crisis.

However, not until Helms' speech yesterday at a luncheon of the American Society of Newspaper Editors had an American official in a position to know come so close to crediting Penkovsky openly.

Helms detailed the kind of work the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies did at the time, trying to separate fact from fiction about what Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev was doing in Cuba. He then included this paragraph:

"Our intelligence files in Washington, however — thanks to U-2 photography of the Soviet Union and to a number of well-placed and courageous Russians who helped us — included a wealth of information on Soviet missile systems. We had descriptions or photographs of the missiles, their transporters and

other associated equipment, and characteristic sites in the Soviet Union."

This enabled specialists, with the help of pictures taken over Cuba, to "tell President Kennedy the exact scope of the threat," Helms said.

Much of Helms' speech was a defense of the CIA against charges that it is an "invisible government."

Helms said, "There is a persistent and growing body of criticism which questions the need and the propriety for a democratic society to have a central intelligence agency."

"It is difficult for me to agree with this view," he said, "but I respect it. It is quite another matter when some of our critics — taking advantage of the traditional silence of those engaged in intelligence — say things that are either vicious, or just plain silly."

Helms emphasized that the CIA had no domestic security functions and had never sought any. "In short," he said, "we do not target on American citizens."

Helms said that "our efforts to obtain foreign intelligence in this country have generated some of the more virulent criticism of the Central Intelligence Agency."

If an American citizen traveling abroad has acquired information that might be useful, "we are certainly going to try to interview him," he said.

"If there is a competent young graduate student who is interested in working for the United States government 'we may well try to hire him."

"The trouble is that to those who insist on seeing us as a pernicious and pervasive secret government, our words 'interview' and 'hire' translate into suborn, subvert, seduce, or something worse," he said.

He added, "We use no compulsion. If a possible source of information does not want to talk to us, we go away quietly. If some student groups object to our recruiting on campus, we

fall back to the nearest federal office building."

The closest Helms came to discussing the CIA's role in current policy issues was his reference to the strategic arms limitation talks. He said it would be "unthinkable" to conclude a SALT agreement with the Soviet Union "without the means for monitoring compliance."

He did not discuss the CIA's role in the observation satellite program or in electronic eavesdropping used for just that purpose. He did say that the United States can safely undertake such an agreement "only if it has adequate intelligence assets to assure itself that the Soviets are living up to their part."

He mentioned checking on both offensive and defensive missile systems with a special reference to the possibility raised in the Pentagon that the Soviets might upgrade certain surface-to-air missile systems.

The United States "must have the means of detecting new developments which might convert one of the regular Soviet air defense missile systems into an ABM network," Helms said.

"We make no foreign policy," he said. The nation "must to a degree take it on faith that we too are honorable men devoted to her service. I can assure you that we are, but I am precluded from demonstrating it to the public," he added.

Helms, who has been with CIA since its creation in 1947 and has been its director since mid-1966, declared that "we not only have no stake in policy debates" within the administration "but we cannot and must not take sides. The role of intelligence in policy formulation is limited to providing facts — the agreed facts — and the whole known range of facts — relevant to the problem under consideration. Our role extends to the estimative function — the projection of likely developments from the facts — but not to advocacy, or recommendations for one course of action or another."

The CIA under one of Helms' predecessors, Allen Dulles, was widely charged with advocacy in the Bay of Pigs debacle and in other covert activities. This was

said to have been changed after a probe of the Bay of Pigs that set up the guidelines listed by Helms.

Helms said it is "for Congress to decide" how the CIA is to be supervised but that "elements" of the Senate and House appropriations and armed services committees "are told more about our operations than is known to most of the personnel in our highly compartmentalized agency."